



* * * * *

LINCOLN THE POET

Poems by ABRAHAM LINCOLN

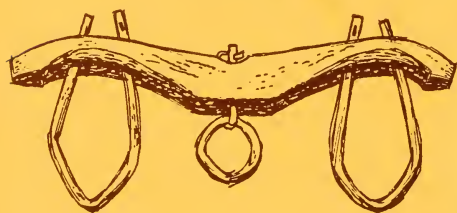
Compiled by

The Poet Hunter



P. H. DODGE
7324 South Shore Drive,
Chicago, Ill.

LINCOLN ROOM
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY



MEMORIAL
the Class of 1901

founded by
HARLAN HOYT HORNER
and
HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER

973763
K 1940 a
cap. 2
East Edge

Lincoln
Room

Benton 1899-1906

LINCOLN THE POET

CONTENTS

MY ANGEL MOTHER
THE GOLDEN RULE CHURCH OF LINCOLN
THE DESERTED VILLAGE
THE MAD-MAN
THE BEAR HUNT
GETTYSBURG
LINCOLN'S PRAYER BEFORE GETTYSBURG
A HOUSE DIVIDED
— PERPETUAL UNION —
WE ARE NOT ENEMIES BUT FRIENDS
WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE
LINCOLN'S FAREWELL AT SPRINGFIELD
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
AMERICAN FREEDOM
THE DANGERS OF DICTATORSHIP
PATRIOTISM, PASSION AND REASON
TEMPERANCE AND PROHIBITION
LABOR AND CAPITAL
THE COMMON PEOPLE
HONOR THE SOLDIERS
AND BLESS THE WOMEN OF AMERICA
ANN RUTLEDGE
THE SABBATH
MOTHER BIXBY

First Edition
Limited to 100 Copies, No.
Copyright 1940, by Paul Hunter Dodge
7324 South Shore Drive, Chicago

82 210

LINCOLN THE POET

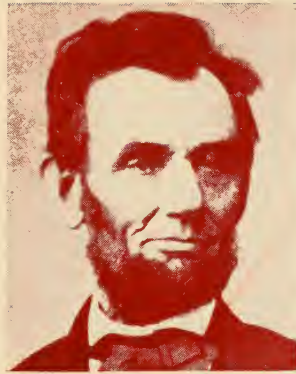
PAUL HUNTER

He had a poet's love of rhyme and rhythm:
He loved the melodies of earth and heaven!
He had a poet's sadness and dejection,
He had a poet's faults and imperfection,
He only lacked our Longfellow's perfection;

He had a Poet's love of Man and Nature,
He had a poet's ear, a prophet's stature!
He had a sage's sense, a Man's emotion,
He had a Father's love and fond devotion,
A measured sense of justice,—deep as ocean;

His genius rivaled Shakespeare and proud Milton:
He sang the shores that liberty was built on!
His winged horse may not have soared Parnassus,
He trod the earth at Gettysburg,—Manassas,—
His hoof-beats felt red soil and sacred ashes!

The Savior of our Country was a Poet:
He had a Poet's Pen,—the World shall know it!
He had a poet's heart and aspiration,
He had a poet's fire and inspiration,
He had a poet's theme,—a bleeding nation.



LINCOLN'S FAVORITE POEM AND POETICAL ASPIRATION

Lincoln loved the great poets, Shakespeare, Byron and Burns, and memorized many of their famous passages.

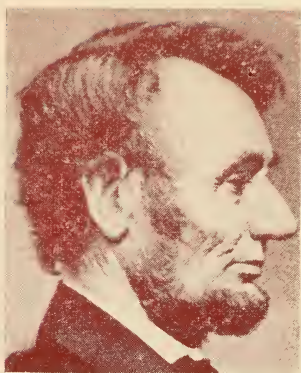
But his favorite poem was Knox's humble elegy, which was learned by heart, and often recited to friends. Lincoln did not know the author, William Knox, who wrote nearly as well as Thomas Gray.

Oh why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
Man passes from life to his rest in the grave.

Of this great elegy, Lincoln wrote to his friend, William Johnson:

"I would give all I am worth, and go in debt, to be able to write so fine a piece as I think this is."

—A. Lincoln.



LINCOLN'S MOTHER

Nancy Hanks Lincoln died in 1818, when Abraham was in his tenth year.

Long afterward, Lincoln said to a friend, with tears in his eyes—as quoted by J. G. Holland:

“All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother,—Blessings on her memory.”

The first lines of this poem are Lincoln's, and most of its phrases are taken from his reported sayings and speeches. It is more his than mine.

—Paul Hunter.

LINCOLN'S CHURCH

Lincoln's simple faith was quoted as follows, before the Connecticut General Assembly by Henry C. Deming, a lawyer, and close friend of Lincoln:

“When any church will inscribe above its altar, as its sole qualification for membership the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both law and Gospel,—‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself!’—that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul.”

The Golden Rule Church of America, founded upon Lincoln's creed and Jefferson's abridged Gospel, known as “The Morals and Teachings of Jesus,” was organized in 1930, at Louisville and Indianapolis, and may be the beginning of a very popular national church.

MY ANGEL MOTHER

* * * * *

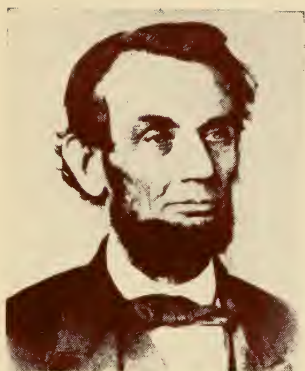
*All that I am, all that I hope to be,
I owe my angel mother,
My hand she guided as I learned to write,
My feet she guided in the ways of right,
My hopes she cherished, as a flame of light, —
But now I wander like a child at night, —
God bless her soul, God bless her memory,
Nancy, my angel mother.*

*Her weary hands are crumbled into dust,
But they shall live in leaves of forest trees;
Her tender heart may make sweet flowers I trust,
Heaven bless her soul, Earth bless her memories,
Nancy, my angel mother.
Can Earth send such another!*

THE GOLDEN RULE CHURCH OF LINCOLN

*There is a Golden Rule of Love to God,
And love and kindness to our fellowmen,
Engraved by Jesus, on the Rock of Ages.*

*When any Church inscribes above its altar,
As its sole faith and creed for fellowship,
The Savior's statement of the law and gospel,
In simple words of faith and charity
And kindness: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
With all thy heart, and all thy soul and mind,
And Thou shalt love thy Neighbor as thyself,"—
That Church will I then join,
With all my heart and soul!*



LINCOLN'S RHYMED POEMS

In a letter to William Johnson, referring to his favorite elegy, Lincoln also wrote: "In the fall of 1844, thinking I might aid Mr. Clay, in Indiana, I went into the neighborhood in that state in which I was raised, where my mother and only sister were buried, and from which I had been absent about fifteen years.

"That part of the country is, within itself, as unpoetical as any spot of the earth; but still, seeing it and its objects and inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry; though whether my expression of those feelings is poetry is quite another question. When I got to writing, the change of subject divided the thing into four little divisions or cantos, the first only of which I send you now, and may send the others hereafter."

Manuscripts of "The Deserted Village" and "The Madman"

The manuscript of "The Deserted Village" and "The Madman", in Abraham Lincoln's own handwriting was recently presented to the Library of Congress by Mary Lincoln Isham of Washington. It shows the original text, and his corrections and revision. In most instances the original text is preferable and retained. Copies of the original manuscript, with corrections, are available, through courtesy of Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor of Lincoln Lore, Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Lincoln's "Deserted Village" compares well with Goldsmith's longer poem on the same subject. The second and last verses are nearly perfect poetry, comparable even to Gray's Elegy. "The Madman" contains three verses of the first order,—the eighth, tenth and last; and the whole poem compares favorably with Goldsmith's "Mad-Dog."

LINCOLN'S LETTER ON "THE MADMAN"

"Friend Johnson: You remember when I wrote you from Tremont last spring, sending you a little canto of what I called poetry, I promised to bore you with another sometime. I now fulfill the promise.

The subject of the present one is an insane man; his name is Matthew Gentry. He is three years older than I, and when we were boys we went to school together. He was rather a bright lad, and the son of the rich man of a very poor neighborhood.

At the age of nineteen he unaccountably became furiously mad, from which condition he gradually settled down into harmless insanity. When, as I told you in my other letter, I visited my old home in the fall of 1844, I found him still lingering in this wretched condition. In my poetizing mood, I could not forget the impression his case made upon me.

"I should ever send you another, the subject will be a "Bear Hunt."

Yours as ever,
A. Lincoln."

LINCOLN'S BEAR HUNT AND SCOTT'S CHASE

A short time later, Lincoln sent Johnson twenty-two verses, which he called "The Bear Hunt", mixing backwoods slang with fine phrases of standard English poets. Lincoln had undoubtedly read Scott's Lady of the Lake, which begins with the classic chase of the stag. Lincoln's diction and treatment of his subject is just as appropriate, and fully as interesting and exciting, if not as elegant as Scott's.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

Abraham Lincoln, 1844

*My childhood home I see again
And gladden with the view,
And still as memories crowd my brain
There's sadness in it too.*

*O Memory, thou midway world
Twixt earth and paradise,
Where loved ones lost and things decayed
In dreamy shadows rise.*

*And freed from all things gross and vile,
Seems hallowed, pure and bright,
Like scenes of some enchanted isle,
All bathed in liquid light.*

*As distant mountains please the eye
When twilight chases day, —
As bugle notes, that passing by,
In distance die away;*

*As leaving some grand waterfall,
We lingering list its roar, —
So memory will hallow all
We've known, but know no more.*

*Now twenty years have passed away
Since here I bade farewell
To woods and fields and scenes of play
And schoolmates loved so well.*

*Where many were, how few remain
Of old familiar things,
But seeing these, to mind again
The lost and absent brings.*

*I hear the lone survivors tell
How naught from death could save,
Till every sound seems like a knell,
And every spot a grave.*

*I range the fields with pensive tread,
And pace the hollow rooms,
And feel, companion of the dead,
I'm living in their tombs!*

THE MAD-MAN

Abraham Lincoln, 1844

*Here is an object of more dread
Than aught the grave contains, —
A human form with reason fled,
While wretched life remains.*

*Poor Matthew, once of genius bright,
A fortune-favored child,
Now locked for aye in mental night,
A haggard madman wild.*

*Poor Matthew, I have ne'er forgot
When first with maddened will
Yourself you maimed, your father fought,
Your mother strove to kill.*

*And terror spread and neighbors ran
Your dang'rous strength to bind,
And soon, a howling crazy man,
Your limbs were fast confined.*

*How then you writhed and shrieked aloud
Your bones and sinews bared,
And fiendish on the gaping crowd
With burning eye-balls glared,*

*And begged and swore, and wept and prayed
With maniac laughter joined;
How painful were these signs displayed
By pangs that kill the mind.*

And when at length, tho drear and long,
Time soothed your fiercer woes,
How plaintively your mournful song
Upon the still night rose.

I've heard it oft as if I dreamed,
Far distant, sweet and lone,
The funeral dirge it ever seemed
Of reason dead and gone.

To drink its strains I've stole away,
All silently and still,
Ere yet the rising god of day
Had streaked the eastern hill.

Air held its breath; trees with the spell
Seemed sorrowing angels round;
Their swelling tears in dewdrops fell
Upon the listening ground.

But this is past, and naught remains
That raised you o'er the brute;
Your maddening shrieks and soothing strains,
Are like, forever mute.

Now fare the well! More thou the cause
Than subject now of woe;
All mental pangs by time's kind laws,
Hast lost the power to know.

O death! Thou awe-inspiring prince
That keepst the world in fear,
Why dost thou tear more blest ones hence,
And leave him lingering here!

THE BEAR HUNT

Abraham Lincoln, 1844

*A wild bear chase didst never see?
Then hast thou lived in vain—
Thy richest bump of glorious glee
Lies desert in thy brain.*

*When first my father settled here,
'Twas then the frontier line;
The panther's scream filled night with fear
And bears preyed on the swine.*

*But woe for bruin's short-lived fun
When rose the squealing cry;
Now man and horse, with dog and gun
For vengeance at him fly.*

*A sound of danger strikes his ear;
He gives the breeze a snuff;
Away he bounds, with little fear,
And seeks the tangled rough.*

*On press his foes, and reach the ground
Where's left his half-munched meal;
The dogs, in circles, scent around
And find his fresh made trail.*

With instant cry, away they dash,
And men as fast pursue;
O'er logs they leap, through water splash
And shout the brisk halloo.

Now to elude the eager pack
Bear shuns the open ground,
Through matted vines he shapes his track,
And runs it, round and round.

The tall, fleet cur, with deep-mouthed voice
Now speeds him, as the wind;
While half-grown pup, and short-legged fice
Are yelping far behind.

And fresh recruits are dropping in
To join the merry corps;
With yelp and yell, a mingled din—
The woods are in a roar—

And round, and round the chase now goes,
The world's alive with fun;
Nick Carter's horse his rider throws,
And Mose Hills drops his gun.

Now, sorely pressed, bear glances back,
And lolls his tired tongue,
When as, to force him from his track
An ambush on him sprung.

*Across the glade he sweeps for flight,
And fully is in view—
The dogs, new fired by the sight
Their cry and speed renew.*

*The foremost ones now reach his rear;
He turns, they dash away,
And circling now the wrathful bear
They have him full at bay.*

*At top of speed the horsemen come,
All screaming in a row—
'Whoop!' 'Take him, Tiger!' 'Seize him, Drum!'
Bang—bang! the rifles go!*

*And furious now, the dogs he tears,
And crushes in his ire—
Wheels right and left, and upward rears,
With eyes of burning fire.*

*But leaden death is at his heart—
Vain all the strength he plies,
And, spouting blood from every part,
He reels, and sinks, and dies!*

*And now a dinsome clamor rose,—
'But who should have his skin?'
Who first draws blood, each hunter knows
This prize must always win.*

*But, who did this, and how to trace
What's true from what's a lie,—
Like lawyers in a murder case
They stoutly argufy.*

*Aforesaid fice, of blustering mood,
Behind, and quite forgot,
Just now emerges from the wood
Arrives upon the spot,*

*With grinning teeth, and up-turned hair
Brim full of punk and wrath,
He growls, and siezes on dead bear
And shakes for life and death—*

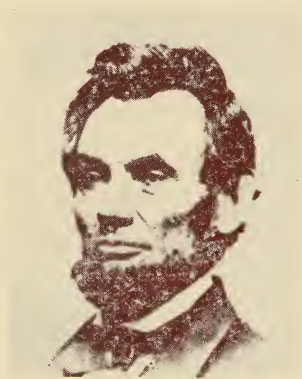
*And swells, as if his skin would tear,
And growls, and shakes again,
And swears, as plain as dog can swear
That he has won the skin!*

*Conceited whelp! we laugh at thee,
Nor mind that not a few
Of pompous, two-legged dogs there be
Conceited quite as you.*

Concerning publication of his three rhymed poems, written in 1844, Lincoln also wrote Johnson:

"I am not at all displeased with your proposal to publish the poetry, or doggerel, or whatever else it may be called, which I sent you. I consent that it may be done. Whether the prefatory remarks in my letter shall be published with the verses, I leave entirely to your discretion; but let names be suppressed by all means."

—A. Lincoln,



LINCOLN'S POETIC ADDRESSES

Although Lincoln probably wrote nothing in rhymed verse after 1846, he developed in his speeches a rhythmic and lofty style, rich in metaphor, which is poetical in the truest sense of that term. His utterances and writings possess the true classic quality of Greek literature. Lincoln had a profound sense of the fitness of things, born of solitary reflection and communion with nature, a keen analysis of human thought and feeling, that could give poetic justice to any noble theme.



THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS A Shakespearian Poem

The first three lines of the Gettysburg address have the same lofty rhythm and majesty of Hamlet's soliloquy, of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or Bryant's *Thanotopsis*.

All lovers of Shakespeare will note that Lincoln, consciously or unconsciously, adopts exactly the same deliberative, reflective meter, for his soliloquy on the suicide of his nation, as Shakespeare used for Hamlet's soliloquy on the suicide of the Prince of Denmark,—both feminine, elastic, pentameter:

“To be or not to be, that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them.”

Compare the identical meter of Lincoln, the Poet:

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers
Brought forth upon this continent a new nation,
Conceived in liberty and dedicated”—

And then Lincoln the lawyer uses a lawyer's word, “proposition”, or thing to be proved, concerning an equality that could not be proved, where the poet would speak of an “ideal.”

So let Lincoln's worshipers and critics remember he was a poet at heart, but a lawyer in diction, and this editor's revision strives to get the heart-beats of Lincoln the Poet.

—Paul Hunter.

The Dedication of
GETTYSBURG

A New Birth of Freedom

A Poem by A. Lincoln, edited by Paul Hunter

*Four score and seven years ago, our fathers
Brought forth upon this continent a new nation,
Conceived in liberty and dedicated
To the ideal that all are free and equal.*

*But now we are engaged in civil war,
Testing the proposition, whether that nation,
Or any nation so conceived or dedicated,
Can long endure. Here we are met
Upon that war's most costly battlefield.*

*We come to dedicate a portion of that field
As a memorial and final resting place
To those who here gave up their willing lives,
That our beloved nation might still live.*

*It is a fitting act that we do this.
But in true words, we cannot dedicate,
We cannot consecrate this hallowed ground.
The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here
Have consecrated it far and above
Our humble power to add or to detract.*

*The world will little note nor long remember
What we have said upon this sacred field,
But never can forget what they did here.*

*It is for us, the living, to be dedicated
To the unfinished work which they who fought here
Have thus so nobly and so well advanced.
It is for us to here be dedicated
To that great task remaining still before us;*

*That from these honored dead we take increased
Devotion to the cause for which they gave
The last full measure of their life's devotion;*

*That we should here highly resolve, these dead
Shall not have died in vain; and that this Nation,
Under God's hand, shall have another birth
Of freedom; and that this our government
Of all the people, by the people, for the people,
Shall live, — and never perish from the earth!*

LINCOLN'S PRAYER BEFORE GETTYSBURG

*Unless Great God shall be with me and aid me,
I know that I must fail; but if the same
Omniscient and almighty arm of God
Shall guide me and support me, then I know
I shall not fail, and our cause shall succeed.*

*Upon my knees, I prayed Almighty God
For victory at Gettysburg; I felt
This was His country, and this war His war;
We could not stand another Fredericksburg
Or Chancellorsville. I made a solemn vow
Before my Maker, that if He would stand
Beside our boys at Gettysburg, that I
Would stand by Him. He did; and so I will!
And after this I felt that God Almighty
Had taken the whole thing into His hands.*

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Springfield, June, 1858

*A house divided thus against itself
Cannot long stand. This Government
Of ours cannot endure, half slave, half free.*

*But I do not expect this noble Union
To be dissolved; and I do not expect
The house to fall; but this I do expect
That it will cease to be divided long.*

*It will become all one thing, or the other.
Either opponents against slavery
Will now arrest its further spread
And give just confidence in its extinction,
Or its own advocates will push it forward,
Till it is lawful in all of the states,
In old and new, in North as well as South.*

— PERPETUAL UNION —
WE ARE NOT ENEMIES BUT FRIENDS

From the First Inaugural, March, 1861

*Under the universal Law of Nations,
Under our Constitution and our Laws,
The Union of these States was made
And is perpetual. Such perpetuity
Must be implied, if not by words expressed
As the first fundamental law of nations.
No government in all the world has ever
Provided in the law of its creation
For its extinction, its own termination.*

*The Union will endure, secure forever,
If we but execute express provisions
Of our first law, the National Constitution.
Speaking of lands, we cannot separate.
We cannot move our valleys or our mountains;
We cannot separate adjoining sections,
Nor build a wall impassable between them.*

*Husband and wife may be divorced and go
Beyond the reach and presence of each other.
But parts of this one country cannot do this.
They always must remain here, face to face,
And intercourse, as friends or enemies,
Must still continue. Is it possible then,
To make that intercourse more advantageous,
Or satisfactory, after a war.
Can aliens make treaties, or make trade,
As well as friends and neighbors in one nation?*

*Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight
Forever. When you cease, after great loss
On both sides, and no gain on either,
The same old questions as to terms of trade
And intercourse are all again upon you.*

*In your hands, not in mine, my countrymen,
Is the momentous issue of civil war.
The Government will not assail you, no!
You have no conflict but as the aggressors.
You have no oath, you've registered in heaven
To ruthlessly destroy the government;
But I have sworn a firm and solemn oath,—
One to preserve, protect, and to defend it!*

*Now I am loath to close. We are not enemies,
But friends; we must not be as enemies.
Though passion may have strained, it must not break
The bonds of our affection. Mystic chords
Of memory, from every battle-field
And patriot grave, to every living heart
And hearthstone, over all this broad free land,
Will join the swelling chorus of the Union,
When they again are touched, as they will be
By fairer angels of our better nature.*

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE

Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, March, 1865

*Four years ago, upon this same occasion,
Our thoughts and fears foreboded civil war;
All dreaded it, and all sought to avert it.*

*Then were our words devoted altogether
Toward saving of the Union without war.
But even then the agents of secession
Were in our capitol, seeking disunion,
Plotting without war to divide the nation.*

*Both parties deprecated civil war;
But rather than to let the nation live
One party would make war; reluctantly
The North accepted war, rather than let
The nation perish. And so war came.*

*The magnitude and long duration which
The war attained, neither anticipated.
Each looked for easy triumph and results
Less fundamental and astounding.*

*Fondly we hope, and fervently we pray—
This mighty scourge of war may pass away.
Yet, if God wills, may it continue till
'All the piled wealth of bondsmens' hundred years
Of unrequited toil shall be sunk down,—
Till every drop of blood drawn by the lash
Shall be paid by another with the sword.*

LINCOLN'S FAREWELL AT SPRINGFIELD

February 11, 1861

Good Friends:

*No one who has not said a like farewell
Can understand my feelings at this hour,
Nor the oppressive sadness of this parting.
More than a quarter century, I've lived among you,
Receiving every kindness at your hands.*

*Here I have lived among you from my youth,
Till now I am an old man, somewhat weary.
Here were assumed the most sacred ties of earth.
My children here were born; one here lies buried.
To you, dear friends, I owe all that I have,
All that I am. All the strange checkered past
Now crowds upon my mind. Today I leave you.*

*I must assume a task more difficult
Than that which once devolved on Washington.
Unless the Great God who inspired him then,
Shall be with and inspire me, I must fail;
But if the same Omniscient Mind shall guide me,
The same Almighty Arm of God support me,
Which once directed and protected him,
I shall not fail,—I know I shall succeed.*

*Let us all pray that our forefather's God
Shall not forsake us now. To his safe watch
Let me commend you all. Likewise permit me,
With equal faith and true sincerity,
To ask that you will too invoke His wisdom
And guidance for me. With these words I leave you,
How long I know not. So, friends, one and all,
I bid you an affectionate farewell.*



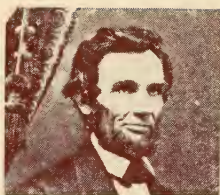
THE FAREWELL ADDRESS

The richly poetical quality of Lincoln's Farewell address, its sublime sincerity and devout humility must be apparent to every one.

When he wrote the Gettysburg and Farewell Addresses, Lincoln was plainly in a highly exalted and poetical mood, for the language used clearly reflects inspiration and exaltation. The frequent metrical forms in his prose highly contributes to its poetical quality. Its chief poetical charm of course, lies in the deep poetical feeling back of both form and words, the result of which is a poetical quality in his expression.

PERRY'S COMMENT

Many of Lincoln's addresses, as said by Professor James Raymond Perry, of Chicago, are surcharged with poetry. Ever and again, the careful observer will discover whole lines, perhaps a succession of lines, in the iambic pentameter form, like the blank verse of Shakespeare, which Lincoln read and re-read, and often memorized. (North American Review, February, 1911, p. 213).



INDEPENDENCE — FREEDOM
— PATRIOTISM

Whenever Lincoln was deeply moved his thoughts seem to have shaped themselves naturally into poetry—the deeper his emotions, the more poetical their expression.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Address at Independence Hall

*With deep emotion, here I find myself,
Standing where stood the fathers of our country,
The wisdom, patriotism, and beloved devotion
To principle and to justice, from which sprang
The institutions under which we live.*

*I never had, politically, a feeling
That did not spring out of the sentiments
Embodied in this oath of Independence.
And often have I pondered o'er the dangers
Incurred by those brave men assembled here
To frame and to adopt this Declaration.*

*And I have pondered o'er the toils endured
By officers and soldiers of the army,
Who fought for and achieved that independence.
And often have I asked myself what cause,
What noble principle or great ideal
Kept this confederacy so long together.*

*It could not be merely the separation
Of colonies weaned from the motherland;
But that sweet sentiment of Liberty,
Found in the Declaration of Independence,
Which gave the hope of Freedom not alone
To people of this country, but held forth
The olive branch to all the world, forever.*

*This document it was, that gave the promise
That in due time, the burden would be lifted
From shoulders of all men, the shackles broken,
And all should have an equal chance to live.
This is the sentiment embodied in
The Declaration of our Independence.*

*And now, my friends, what think you? Can this
Country
Be saved upon this basis? If it can,
I, for myself, will be the happiest man
In all the world, if I can help to save it.*

*If it cannot be saved, with that fair principle,
It will be truly awful. If this country
Cannot be saved, with freedom and equality,
Without surrendering that principle,—
I was about to say, I'd rather die,
Assassinated on this sacred spot.*

AMERICAN FREEDOM

The Perpetuity of our Free Institutions
Lincoln's Speech at Springfield, January, 1837.

*In the great journal of things happening
Beneath the sun, we free Americans
Now find ourselves in peaceful ownership
Of this, the fairest portion of the earth,
First in fertility and favored climate.*

*We find ourselves under a government
And institutions more essentially
Conducing to the ends of liberty,
Both civil and religious, more benign,
Than any of which history can tell us.*

*We find ourselves legal inheritors
Of these our fundamental blessings.
We toiled not to acquire or to establish
These cherished rights; they are a legacy
Bequeathed to us by a once hardy, brave,
And patriotic race of ancestors.*

*Theirs was the task, and nobly they performed it,
To win themselves and us this goodly land,
And to uprear upon its hills and valleys
An edifice of liberty and justice.
Our task is to transmit them unprofaned
By foot of an intruder, undecayed
By lapse of time, untorn by usurpation,
To future generations of our people.*

*How then shall we perform this task, and show
Our fathers gratitude, ourselves plain justice,
And our posterity, our duty done?
And where shall we expect approach of danger?
Shall we expect some trans-Atlantic giant,
Some military power to cross the ocean
And crush our freedom at a single blow?*

*Never! Not all the armies of all Europe,
Asia and Africa combined, with all
The treasures of the earth,—our own excepted,—
Within their fulsome military chest,
And with a Bonaparte for a commander,—
Could take one drink, by force, from the Ohio,
Or make a black track upon our blue ridge,—
Even if they should try a thousand years!*

*At what point, then, is this approach of danger
To be expected? I must answer thus,—
If ever it shall reach us, it must spring
Here, up amongst us! Never from abroad!
If such destruction be our lot, ourselves
Must be its author and its finisher.
As a great nation of free men, we live
Throughout all time, or die by suicide!*

THE DANGERS OF DICTATORSHIP

Lincoln's Speech at Springfield, January, 1837

*There are in this land many great good men,
Well qualified for any task of state,
Whose fair ambition would aspire to nothing
Beyond a seat in Congress, or perhaps
A governor's, or presidential chair;
But such belong not to the family
Of the wild lion, or the eagle's tribe!*

*What! Think you that these honored public places
Would satisfy an Alexander's pride,
A Caesar's or Napoleon's ambition?
No never! Towering genius still disdains
A beaten path, but seeks the unexplored.
It scorns to tread the footpaths of another;
It will not serve under a greater chief.
It thirsts for glory, and burns for distinction;
And it will have it, whether at expense
Of freeing slaves, or of enslaving freemen!*

PATRIOTISM, PASSION AND REASON

Lincoln's Speech at Springfield, January, 1837

*The patriotic fervor which once was,—
The powerful influence and inspiring awe
Our Revolution had upon the people,—
Long helped maintain our noble institutions,
But that was passion, rather than sound judgment.*

*These histories are gone. They can be read
No more forever. Once a tower of strength,
Their walls are leveled, not by an invader,
But by time's silent sure artillery.
They were a forest of gigantic oaks,
But now despoiled of verdure, shorn of foliage,
They were the pillars of our liberty,
Crumbled away now; and the temple falls,
Unless we, as descendants, fill their places
With pillars hewn from out the solid quarry
Of sober reason. Passion helps no more.*

*Cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason—
Must furnish all materials for our temple.
Let those materials be molded well
Into a general intelligence,
A sound morality, and reverence
For our loved constitution and the laws.*

*Then shall our country evermore improve,
And Washington's proud nation, honestly
Revering his great name, shall not permit
A hostile foot to pass or desecrate
His resting place, till the last trump
Shall blow and waken our loved Washington.*

*Upon these pillars, reason, law, and justice,
Let the proud fabric of our freedom rest,
As stands the Rock of Ages on its basis;
And as was said of that one greater institution,
"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

TEMPERANCE AND PROHIBITION

*Teach all men temperance and moderation,
But let Man have his freedom and his Conscience!*

*The cause of temperance can but be injured
By prohibition, which is but a form
Of harsh intolerance,—intemperance!*

*It goes beyond the bounds of law and reason,
When it attempts to seek a firm control
Of free men's appetites, by legislation,
And makes a crime of things that are not crimes.*

*Such prohibition strikes a traitor's blow
Against the very principle of freedom,
Whereon our law and government were founded.*

*I always have been found upon the side
Of weaker classes, laboring to protect
Them from the stronger. Never can I give
Consent to such oppressive lawless laws!*

*Until my tongue is silenced by cold death,
I will forever fight for rights of Man,
For tolerance, and freedom for all people!*

LABOR AND CAPITAL

*Labor and Laborers are not a class
Divorced from Capital, nor are they servants
Induced by others owning capital,
To work unwillingly alone for hire.
The fruit of labor, known as capital,
Could not exist without the laborer.*

*Capital has its rights, along with labor,
Both worthy of protection. Their relation
Is mutual, with mutual benefits.
But error lies within the false assumption
That all the labor of communities
Exists in that relation separate.*

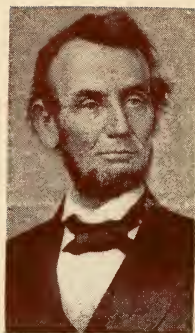
*In small communities, where both commingle,
The great mass of our thrifty rural workers
Mingle their labor with their capital;
They labor with their hands and many tools
And implements, and hire some other hands
To labor for them. Theirs is a mixed class,
And not a separate, distinct, or yet
Divided group of capital and labor.*

*Your property is but the fruit of labor.
It is desirable; it is a positive good;
And it is capital, and every owner
Though he may labor, is a capitalist.*

*That some should be rich, only shows that others
May too become rich. Riches is a just
Encouragement to enterprise and labor.
Let all then work together, and be just.*

*Let not him that is houseless enviously
Pull down the house his thrifty neighbor built,
But let him work himself as diligently,
And build himself a house, thus by example,
Assuring that his house be safe from violence.*





GILDER'S COMMENT

Mr. R. W. Gilder, in his masterly "Lincoln the Leader," speaking of Lincoln's literary style, says:

Lincoln's style might have had all these qualities and yet not carried as it did. Beyond these traits comes the miracle—the poetical cadence of his prose and its traits of pathos and of imagination. Lincoln's prose, at its height and when his spirit was stirred by aspiration and resolve, affects the soul like noble music. Indeed, there may be found in all his great utterances a strain which is like the leading motive in musical drama, a strain of mingled pathos, heroism and resolution. That is the strain in the two inaugurals, in the "Gettysburg Address," and in his letter of consolation to a bereaved mother, which moves the hearts of generation after generation.

THE COMMON PEOPLE

*God must have loved the Common People much,
Or he would not have made so many of them.
Let me appeal to you again, good people,
To bear in mind, the Union rests with you.
Not with the politicians, not with presidents,
Nor yet with office-seekers, but with you,
Remains the question, — Shall the Union live,
And shall the liberties of this our country
Survive, and be preserved for generations?*

HONOR THE SOLDIERS AND BLESS THE WOMEN OF AMERICA

Washington Fair, March, 1864

*This extraordinary war, wherein
We are so long engaged, falls heavily
Upon all classes of our people, yet
Most hard and heavily upon the soldiers.
You know it has been said, all a man hath
He will surrender freely for his life.
And while you all contribute of your substance,
The soldier puts his very life at stake,
And often yields it up for love of country.
The highest merit then is due the soldier.*

*In the relief of soldiers and their families,
The Women of America stand foremost.
In art of eulogy and compliment
I am not well accustomed. But if all
That has been said by orators and poets,
Since Eve's creation in the world of Man,
In praise of Women, were applied to ours,
It would not half do justice to the Women
Of our America, for their good conduct
In this hard war. Now let me close by saying,
God bless the Women of America!*

ANN RUTLEDGE

* * * * *

*I truly loved the girl, so sweet and gay,
I loved the woman dearly; to this day
I love the name of Rutledge. Sweet and fair
Was Ann, with sunny streaming golden hair,
With cherry lips and bonny bright blue eye,—
A lovely girl to make a lover sigh.*

*She had a loving heart, a lofty mind,
A gentle spirit, natural and kind.
I loved her rosy cheek and lily brow.
I truly loved her, and I love her now.
She would have made a good and loving wife,
Had not a fever coveted her life.*

THE SABBATH

*As we shall keep or break the Sabbath Day,
We nobly save, or meanly lose
The last best hope for which we fondly pray,
The rest and peace, and time to muse
Of friends away from home and hearth,
And hopes and loves beyond this earth.*



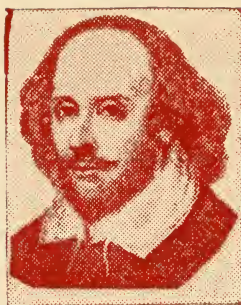
LINCOLN'S WORDS ON ANN RUTLEDGE

After Lincoln's election to the Presidency, an old friend asked him if it was true that he loved and courted Ann Rutledge, and Lincoln replied:

"It is true—true; indeed I did. I have loved the name of Rutledge to this day. It was my first. I loved the woman dearly. She was a handsome girl; would have made a good, loving wife; was natural and quite intellectual, though not highly educated. I did honestly and truly love the girl, and think often, often of her now."

Ann's father was one of the famous South Carolina families, who had emigrated to Kentucky and Illinois, founding the village of New Salem.

Lincoln's rival, McNamara, described Ann as a lovely, refined girl, with golden hair, cherry-red lips, and a bonny blue eye."



SHAKESPEARE LINCOLN'S APPRECIATION — MACBETH

In a letter to the famous actor, James K. Hackett, August 17, 1863, Lincoln wrote as follows:

"For one of my age I have seen very little of the drama. Some of Shakespeare's plays I have never read, while others I have gone over perhaps as frequently as any unprofessional reader. Among the latter are "Lear" "Richard III", "Henry VIII", "Hamlet", and especially "Macbeth". I think nothing equals "Macbeth." It is wonderful."

Lord Carlisle was one of the few Shakespearian critics who voiced the same praise of "Macbeth."

Dr. Warren, Editor of Lincoln Lore, says that Lincoln probably understood Shakespeare, so far as he had read him, far better than many men who set themselves up for critical authorities.

In 1907, at Stratford on Avon, the editor of this booklet published a readable abridgement of "Macbeth", in sixteen pages, illustrated from the old Cassell prints, with the intervening story in blank verse, composed almost entirely of Shakespeare's own phrases.

"Macbeth" was chosen as the most interesting and thrilling drama, for the first of a series, entitled,

"The Royal Road to Shakespeare"

by Paul Hunter Dodge

This abridgement found an eager reception among Eton, Rugby, Cambridge and Oxford students, and was republished in America, under the title, Shakespearean Poems, in 1907.

"Hamlet", "Othello", "Lear", "Caesar", "Romeo and Juliet" and the "Merchant of Venice" still wait in manuscript.

MOTHER BIXBY

Lincoln's Letter to a War Mother of Five Sons

*Among the records of the War Department,
I have been shown a paper full of grief
But full of pride and honor to a Mother
Of Massachusetts sons whose names are Bixby.*

*You are the Mother of five noble Sons
Who all died gloriously on the field of battle.
I feel how weak and altogether fruitless
Must be these words, or any words of mine
To stay a grief of loss so overwhelming.*

*But I cannot refrain from tendering you
Whatever consolation you may find
In thanks of a republic which they died to save.
I pray our heavenly father may assuage
The anguish of your heart, and leave you only
The cherished memory of the loved and lost,
The solemn pride that must be yours forever,
To have laid on the altar-stone of freedom
So costly and so dear a sacrifice.*

POETRY ABOUT LINCOLN WALT MASON AND WALT WHITMAN

A hundred poems eulogizing Abraham Lincoln have been collected in "The Poet's Lincoln," by Osborn Olroyd. (Chapple, Boston, 1915).

Foremost of these is Walt Mason's "The Eyes of Lincoln."

Here, it may be remarked that Walt Mason wrote true poetry in the form of prose, while Walt Whitman generally wrote prose in the form of poetry.

POETRY — POESY — PROSERY

We need more exact words for literary forms. The word Poetry should be confined to true rhymed lyric poetry, as the public mind knew poetry in Tennyson, Shelley and Keats, in Longfellow, Whittier and Poe. Let blank verse be called Poesy, in which the poetic thought is paramount, and the unrhymed but elastic rhythmical form secondary. But let us call mere ornamental or metaphorical prose, Proserly, which would cover most of Whitman's exclamations, and most of his followers' ornate works.

Whitman however did write a few real poems, and one of his best is of Lincoln, O Captain! My Captain!

THE EYES OF LINCOLN

—Walt Mason

Sad eyes, that were patient and tender,
Sad eyes, that were steadfast and true,
And warm with the unchanging splendor
Of courage no ills could subdue!

Eyes dark with the dread of the morrow,
And woe for the day that was gone,
The sleepless companions of sorrow,
The watchers that witnessed the dawn.

Eyes tired from the clamor and goading,
And dim from the stress of the years,
And hollowed by pain and foreboding,
And stained by repression of tears.

Sad eyes that were weary and blighted,
By visions of sieges and wars,
Now watch o'er a country united,
From the luminous slopes of the stars!



LINCOLN THE POET

PAUL HUNTER

* * * * *

\$1 — For Sale — 50c

at the ARGUS BOOKSTORE

16 N. Michigan Ave.

Phone State 6156

Chicago